



Evaluation Summaries

Nias Islands Rural Access and Capacity Building Project

Quick Facts

Countries: *Indonesia*

Mid-Term: *July 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Employment Intensive Investments*

Evaluation Management: *responsible Region or Technical Sector in HQ*

Evaluation Team: *David Stiedl, Dr Krishna S Pribadi*

Project Start: *October 2009*

Project End: *June 2012*

Project Code: *INS/09/02/IDA*

Donor: *Multi Donor under World Bank trusteeship (11.8 million US\$)*

Keywords: *road construction, maintenance, labour intensive employment, capacity building, supervisory training, local government, community participation, community contracting, trail and trail bridge construction*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Nias Rural Access and Capacity Building Project (RACBP) is a 33-month project designed to improve livelihoods and local economic development of communities on the island of Nias by rehabilitating and improving the rural transport infrastructure and building the capacity of small contractors, communities

and local government to plan, deliver and maintain the infrastructure.

The project is part of the post tsunami and earthquake reconstruction funded by the Multi Donor Fund for Aceh and Nias (MDF), and is intended as a partner to the Nias Local Economic Development Programme (LEDP) agriculture improvement project.

RACBP is directly implemented by the ILO with a budget of 11.8 million USD. It commenced in October 2009 and is intended to be completed by June 2012.

The project's physical outputs are expected to be 100 km of rural roads and motorcycle trails and 36 trail bridges, all delivered by small contractors and communities using local resource-based approaches. Maintenance systems will also be put in place. Contractors, supervisory staff, communities and local government officials will be supported and trained in all aspects of the work. In addition there is a small cultural heritage component to rehabilitate traditional houses and megaliths.

Present situation of project

The project is just past its mid point. All the planned procedures and processes are in place and functioning well, but implementation is running three to four months behind schedule. This is primarily due protracted discussions on acceptable forms of contract for small contractors and communities. There is also a significant budget short fall due to depreciation of the USD against the Indonesian Rial.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation was to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Nias RACBP. It assesses whether the project is likely to deliver the expected outcomes in time and budget, summarises key achievements and provide recommendations on exit strategy, adjustments in programme arrangements, budget allocations and involvement of stakeholders and areas for possible up scaling. The clients are the MDF and the Government of Indonesia as represented by the National Steering Committee.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology is based upon document reviews, informant interviews in Nias, Medan and Jakarta, visits to nine ongoing construction sites in five districts and a workshop with key Nias stakeholders. Performance is evaluated against the latest revision of the RACBP Results Framework and the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The evaluation concluded that the RACBP is a well designed and well managed project that is making a positive contribution to the life of the rural poor and fits well with the priorities of the State Ministry for Accelerated Development of Backward Regions (KPDT), the MDF and ILO's Decent Work Programme.

It is making a good contribution to the knowledge base of rural road, trail and trail bridge designs with solutions that are appropriate for local skills, cost effective and environmentally sound. It is effectively raising the technical and managerial capacity of contractors and community groups and increasing the skills base by giving young people the chance to join the industry. The high standard of support from Helvetas Nepal engineers in the trail bridge component should be noted.

However the project will not reach its original physical targets without an extension of time and funds. It will probably only deliver 67 km of the intended 100 km of roads and trails by the end of May 2012. In addition the devaluation of the USD against the IDR has effectively reduced the purchasing power of the project by 20%. An additional USD 3.7 million has been requested within the MDF framework but these funds by themselves will not be sufficient. The project also needs a time extension of at least six months.

Because of limited involvement by the district authorities, the project has not managed to find an institutional home for its innovations. A significant extension, possibly a second phase with a project redesign would be required for this. The objective of this extension would be to develop an organisation that could secure and expand the projects innovations within Nias and to larger targets in the province and similarly disadvantaged provinces across the nation. Replicating and expanding the approach through a national programme such as PNPM is an option supported by KPDT and MOHA.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The project should focus on completing a programme of 67 km of road and trails and 1100 m of trail bridges within its current budget by end May 2012. No additional work should be taken on and no additional funds should be requested unless a time extension is possible. *Action: Now. Responsibility: RACBP and ILO Jakarta*
2. Only two batches of private sector contracts should be awarded within the current time frame. A third batch could be considered if there is a time extension. Given the efficient and effective procedures that have been developed for community contracts, these can be used to

finish off uncompleted works. *Action: Now. Responsibility: RACBP*

3. The 3.7 million USD currently being developed should be reconfigured on the basis of a six month extension. The focus should be the delivery of the original 100 km programme, better coordination with LEDP to help with access needs of their target groups, re-design and re-introduction of local government staff training in technology and contractual innovations and the promotion of a culture and tourism programme to support the sustainability of traditional housing. *Action: Now. Responsibility: RACBP, ILO Jakarta, MDF, National and Local Steering Committee*
4. The pavement standards and the community trail bridge programme introduced by RACBP are highly appropriate for low cost low traffic access and could be applicable nationwide. There is a risk of the approaches being forgotten post project unless an appropriate branch of government takes ownership. This should be explored further. *Action: Before December 2011. Responsibility: National and Local Steering Committee*
5. The current minimum district access standard of three metres width could deprive the rural population of a very valuable and useful level of motorcycle-only access. There is scope for a high level policy decision on rural transport to allow districts to modify these standards in remote or “backward” areas. The adoption of motorcycle and power tiller trailers would increase the utility of these trails. *Action: Before RACBP project closure as it has the facilities to organise a workshop and study tour for decision makers. Responsibility: National and Local Steering Committee*
6. RTI plans should be completed for all districts and the road numbering system re-introduced to facilitate future planning and

the final evaluation. The qualitative aspects of the baselines also requires full documentation. This will require the re-filling of the project’s head of planning section post, which is even more important if the project is extended to include LEDP access priorities. *Action: Now. Responsibility: RACBP*

7. The apprentice supervisor programme will have produced a good batch of valuable technicians. Pro-active steps need to be taken to avoid this expertise being lost, including dialogue with local government and the contractors association. *Action: before close of project. Responsibility: RACBP*
8. Training of communities in road maintenance should start as soon as possible, even where work has not been completed. Communities should be made aware of their responsibilities before work commences and encouraged to form maintenance committees at that time. *Action: Now. Responsibility: RACBP*
9. A better approach is needed to ensure the survival of traditional houses as neither the poor occupants nor the local government budgets can afford the re-thatching cycle or major repairs. Interventions could include research into alternative roofing materials that are more in keeping with traditional thatching and linkages to tourism initiatives such as home stay or eco tourism to generate revenue. *Action: By December 2011. Responsibility: RACBP, Local Governments on Nias, Museum of Nias*
10. The UNESCO proposal in its revised form is a very positive contribution to the sustainability of the cultural heritage on Nias, fully complimentary to the ongoing RACBP component, and should be supported. *Action: Now. Responsibility: National and Local Steering Committee, ILO, UNESCO*

11. At less than three years, this is a very short time for a capacity building programme, and the project is just now in a position to mainstream its approach. There is a very good case for a second phase to this project, focusing on motorcycle trails and trail bridges only, and with a view to national replication. A suitable counterpart organisation needs to be found, one option being PNPM, expanded to include private contractor specialist support while community contracts do the majority of the work. KPDT and MOHA support this approach. *Action: Long term but discussions starting now. Responsibility: Initially the project steering committee and the ILO, in the long term to be decided*

Important lessons learned

1. 33 months is far too short for a capacity building programme. The project has done very well to identify and start to address the capacity needs in the time available, but at least one more three year phase would be necessary to ensure that the approach was sustainable without project backing.
2. Ownership, in this case of the districts and local government with respect to rural transport, is an essential element of project design. The pressure to rebuild, combined with the government's drive for increased autonomy at a local level, has made this issue very difficult for the project. However this is a common problem: projects are often based on what is, rather than what is likely to happen in the future. The project design and projects in general would benefit from more attention to issues of insitutionalisation and change.
3. Maintenance is another issue with which the ILO has long experience. It is obvious in the case of Nias that districts will not have a sufficient maintenance budget for many years. Communities can be very effective at the level of works required, but only if they are fully involved from the planning stage and fully aware of the long

term obligation and inputs required. This component should be built into all rural access projects.

4. The short time span has been compounded by significant delays created by ILO Geneva concerns about the legal basis of FIDIC and community contracts. This is surprising as programmes within ILO have been working with these issues for at least twenty years, and supporting and advising countries on their introduction. These fundamental issues should be resolved in ILO Geneva for general application and not left for as a burden for field projects to resolve. Despite the above, the lessons about the effectiveness of community contracts as a transparent, efficient and participatory process if properly managed have been reinforced.